

Inaugural

India Health Policy & Systems Research Fellowship

15 January 2021, 2.00-3.00 PM (IST)

India Health Policy Systems & Research (HPSR) Fellowships programme aims to build capacity of mid-career public health professionals for strengthening health systems through evidence-based policymaking. This blended training programme, spread over a period of 18 months, includes online, face-to-face modules & mentorship for conducting a HPSR study. *More details at [India HPSR Fellowships](#)*

Anchored by the Health Systems Transformation Platform (HSTP), the fellowship is organized in collaboration with WHO Alliance for Health Systems and Policy Research, Institute of Public Health Bengaluru, Achutha Menon Centre for Health Systems Studies, The George Institute of Global Health - India, Nossal Institute of Global Health, Institute of Tropical Medicine Antwerp, & India Health Systems Collaborative.

Prominent health systems practitioners and HPSR experts: Abdul Ghaffar, Kabir Sheikh, Keshav Desiraju, Sundari Ravindran, Indrani Gupta, Asha George, Rajani Ved, Lucy Gilson, Barbara McPake, Kara Hanson, Wim Van Damme, and John Porter were involved in program and curriculum design. Call for application for Cohort 2021 was launched on 4 November 2020 and 149 applications were received. Forty (40) Indian and global public health professionals and researchers participated in the selection of twenty (20) fellows.

On 15th January 2021, India HPSR Fellowship programme was inaugurated (virtually and live streamed across the globe), a recording of which can be viewed at [Inauguration of India HPSR Fellowships Program](#).



Rajeev Sadanandan, CEO HSTP welcomed the dignitaries & fellows. He provided overview of HSTP's work portfolio and emphasized that it was setup to generate evidence for policy & practice and build capacity for research. He highlighted this fellowship aims to create a collaborative platform for researchers and policy makers to produce evidence-based policy research for improving service delivery.



Prashanth N Srinivas, Assistant Director Research, Institute of Public Health (IPH Bengaluru) introduced the twenty fellows of Cohort 2021. He detailed upon the fellowship learning outcomes, structure, eligibility, and selection criteria highlighting avenues for post-fellowship engagement for a thriving HPSR ecosystem in India.



N Devadasan, Technical Advisor HSTP, informed about the genesis and journey undertaken to bring the India HPSR fellowships programme to fruition. He opined that this is the beginning of many future cohorts of researchers who will make a difference in the HPSR arena in the country.



Rajesh Bhushan, Secretary, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India in his inaugural address, congratulated all the fellows and highlighted that there is a renewed interest in evidence-based research, which feeds into policy making across national programmes as well as innovative interventions undertaken both by the Union and State Governments. Shri. Bhushan detailed upon the National Health Mission (NHM) and existing mechanisms of planning for programmatic interventions undertaken by the States, to which research is an integral mandate. Research from HSTP and that produced by the HPSR fellows could strengthen this mandate and support improving program implementation. He wished the programme success and urged the fellows to deliver concrete outcomes as well as better data and analytics for addressing the basic health issues being faced now.



Soumya Swaminathan, Chief Scientist, World Health Organization, in her inaugural remarks, emphasized the importance of HPSR and how this fellowship ushers in a transformative change in Indian health systems. She mentioned policy makers and practitioners realize that interlinkages among financing, skilled human resources, functional information systems and good governance lead to a wider understanding of health systems. This requires a multidisciplinary inquiry to understand the problem and test relevant solutions. To ensure research contributes to policy and practice, it should be understandable & usable by policymakers. An ideal situation for this is to have policy makers and researchers work together to develop useful questions, which seems to be integral to this fellowship. She wished the fellows all success and hoped this fellowship would be a model for other countries to emulate.

The inaugural culminated with **Dorothy Lall**, Faculty, IPH Bengaluru, thanking the stakeholders and partners engaged in the development and operations of the India HPSR Fellowships programme. She informed that they would be further engaging with state governments, technical support organizations, development partners, Indian and global public health schools to collaborate to strengthen this initiative. These valuable partnerships strengthen the learning ecosystem and provide a platform for the fellows to interact with experts during their professional life course.

Dr Maharaj Kishan Bhan, HSTP's pillar of strength, continues to inspire our work. We are grateful to the HSTP Board, Sir Ratan Tata Trusts, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Access Health International for their support & HPSR practitioners and researchers involved with this initiative. Thanks to HSTP and IPH Bengaluru teams.

